



# The Daily Navigator

13th National Veterans Golden Age Games

## Against All Odds

Wednesday, August 10, 1999

## *The Spirit of the American Veteran*

*By Teresa Fox  
Martinsburg, W.V., VAMC*

**A** diversity is a word well known to every human being – if not in name then in meaning. From the beginning of each military career, whether it was stateside or on foreign soil, our veterans have overcome obstacles great and small. Each has developed personal coping skills that have helped them persevere and weather the storms of life. Just take a good look around, and you'll see what I mean.

While walking around the campus of this beautiful college, I had the opportunity to converse with a number of the participants. Regardless of where they're originally from, how many times they've attended or the conditions under which they're competing, one thing remains the same, a common thread running through the very essence of their being – the spirit of the American veteran.

Americanism is prevalent within these honorable ones who have borne the burden of our wars, and watched vigilantly during times of peace. You can see it displayed everywhere. Art Casillas, a Korean War veteran from Long Beach, Calif., displays his patriotism with his red, white and blue bandannas and the words he speaks from his heart about participating in these Games. A wheelchair competitor, Casillas has participated every year since the beginning and says he will continue for as long as he can. He relates his story with ease, and there is a bitter-sweet quality to his voice when he speaks of buddies who have not returned from previous years. His teammate Jay Kimball, also a wheelchair-using Korean vet from Long Beach, is competing in the Games this year for the very first time. The two vets met at the shot-put competition and each took a picture of the other as keepsakes, joking that they

will send the photos to Hollywood when they are developed. The overcast sky does not dampen their spirits as they wait their turn to compete.

Shelley Lee and Gary Home, both wheelchair veterans from Houston, Texas, are here for their first try at the Gold. While Home scored a Gold medal in shuffleboard, Lee did not do quite as well. But his spirits are not weakened by the loss. His gratitude shows as he talks of the volunteers who are so very helpful, pointing out that many things would not be possible for him were it not for the volunteers. Lee's hopes, like most, are to return in future years to compete and enjoy the fellowship of his comrades. His spirit remains strong.

During lunch, I chatted with Bill Randall, an Army veteran from the Martinsburg, W.V., VAMC. This is Randall's tenth time at the Games. Like many other veterans who live on the campus of a VA medical center, being here at the Games is like a vacation for him. He gets to catch up with friends he's made in previous years, and relive old times. He tells me of his triumphs during the week, and hopes to travel to see his family soon. Even with his quiet temperament, Randall's spirit is evident as his eyes sparkle during our conversation about his military service. Clearly, the American pride still lives here.

This is a very special time for our veterans. These men and women have given the ultimate sacrifice so that freedom can reign throughout this great nation. Yet sometimes, their contributions are forgotten or left by the wayside in life's day-to-day routine. But here at the National Veterans Golden Age Games – a "family reunion" of kindred souls – they are recognized once again for the truly great Americans they are. And they show us just how spirit can prevail over adversity.

## Attention Athletes

**ALL WHEELCHAIR ATHLETES:** Please try to arrive at the Scandling dining hall **15 minutes early** for lunch and dinner (10:45 a.m. for lunch, and 4:45 p.m. for dinner) each day. Arriving early will help everyone get faster and smoother service at lunch and dinner.

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** If you are staying on campus, you can leave your used washcloths and towels on the floor outside your room by 8:30 a.m. each morning. They will be picked up, laundered and delivered back to your room in the afternoon.

**MEDICATIONS:** If you find or lose any medications, please report to the Hubbs Health Center on St. Clair Street. Also, if you have asked for prescriptions to be filled, please pick them up at the Hubbs Medical Center. No medications can be delivered.

**UNCLAIMED MEDALS:** You can pick up any unclaimed medals at the Command Center.

**AA MEETINGS:** An AA meeting is being held daily at 12:30 p.m. on the second floor of the Scandling Center.

## Saying Goodbye to a Truly Inspirational Athlete

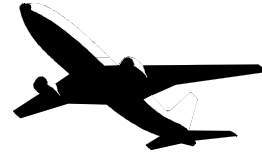
Ivan Kornutik, the first National Veterans Golden Age Games "Inspiration Award" winner in 1990, passed away this year at the age of 86 after a long battle with cancer. Kornutik, a World War II combat veteran from Bayonne, N.J., was well known at this event for his positive attitude, winning spirit and ability to inspire his fellow athletes.

Although totally deaf, Kornutik had no problem communicating. Whenever he was unable to read the lips of his partner in conversation, he would flash a small sign that read: "I'm deaf. Please speak slowly and distinctly. If that doesn't work, write me a note!" One way or another, he managed to get his message across.

His teammates from the East Orange, N.J., VA Medical Center say they are competing here this week with heavy hearts, having lost Kornutik as well as fellow competitors and friends Ted Smith and Eugene Leddy. Wesley Porch recalls that Kornutik was always smiling, while Herman Belkoff remembers how much he enjoyed traveling from his home to his outpatient visits at the East Orange VAMC in

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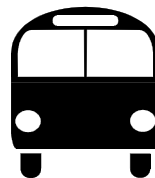
## Important Departure Information



If you will be flying home after the Games and have not provided the following information to the Information Center at the Scandling Center, please do so **by noon tomorrow**:

- Your Name
- Airline
- Flight Number, Date and Time of Departure
- Airport location (Rochester/Syracuse).

You **must** stay with your luggage on departure day. Information on pick-up times and locations for departures will be provided later in the week.



## Shuttle Schedule

**\*\*\* Ambulatory participants in the bowling event today will leave from the Scandling Center at 7:30 a.m., and wheelchair participants will leave at 11:30 a.m.**

Transportation is available not only to get you around the Hobart Campus, but also to other locations such as a local supermarket and plaza to pick up forgotten items, or to a movie theater to see a show. Shuttles will run continuously from **6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.**

All shuttle service buses will cover the same route. Those displaying a **red** color-coded sign in the front window will provide transportation for wheelchair and some ambulatory participants. Buses with **blue** color-coded signs will transport ambulatory (those who do not require a wheelchair) participants. These shuttles will stop at, or near, each on-campus event site.

Transportation information and loading times for all alternate activities and off-campus events is available in all dorms and in the Scandling Center. All alternate activities trips, Golf and Bowling (ambulatory) will depart from Pulteney Street in front of the Scandling Center. Wheelchairs for those events will load from Hale/Bartlett/Durfee and Medbery Visitor parking lot, across from the Scandling Center.

# Schedule of Events

**Thursday, August 12**

7:00 a.m.	Golf	Seneca Lake Country Club
7:00 a.m.–5:00 pm	Niagara Falls Trip	Niagara Falls
9:00 a.m.	Swimming(Wheelchair)	Bristol Swimming Pool
10:00 a.m.	Swimming (Ambulatory)	Bristol Swimming Pool
2:00 p.m.	Bocce Exhibition	William Smith Green
4:00 p.m.	Daily Medal Ceremony	Smith Library Patio
7:30 p.m.	Closing Ceremony, Reception and Entertainment	Bristol Field House

## Ivan (cont.)

his manual wheelchair – a distance of 13 miles. Coach Arlene Raynor added that Kornutik exemplified the true meaning of the Games year after year, and always gave 100 percent.

A paraplegic, Kornutik also competed in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, where he was often the oldest participant. While in his 80s, he also learned to ski at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Colorado. And, with a 1995 win at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for one of his metal sculptures, Kornutik had the distinction of being the *only* veteran to have participated in all four of VA's annual national recreation therapy programs.

Ivan Kornutik – a gold medal athlete with a heart of pure gold, was a winner all the way.

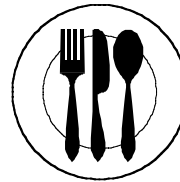
## Fascinating Fact!

Update: so far this week, there are 1,071 volunteer assignments at the 13th National Veterans Wheelchair Games, totaling 15,096 volunteer hours!

## Medical Assistance

The Hubbs Health Center is located on St. Clair Street. There is support on duty 24 hours a day.

There is also be a mobile medical unit located on campus next to Hubbs Health Center on St. Clair Street, open from 8:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.



## On the Menu...

**Lunch (11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.):** Chicken Patty on Bun; Goulash with Meat; Vegetarian Goulash; Deli Egg Salad; Steamed Zucchini

**Dinner (5:00-7:00 p.m.):** Baked Ham/Scalloped Potatoes; Cheese Lasagna with Meat/Meatless Sauce; Green Peas with Mushrooms

**Standard Daily Breakfast Offerings:** Egg Whites/Beaters; Hot cereal/Fruits; Pastries/Cereals; Yogurt (*breakfast is served from 6:30-8:30 a.m. every morning*)

**Standard Daily Lunch Offerings:** Full Deli/Salad Bar; Hot Soup/Cereals; Fresh Fruits; Desserts/Ice Cream

**Standard Daily Dinner Offerings:** Baked Potato; Hot Soup/Cereals; Full Salad Bar; Desserts/Ice Cream

**Standard Daily Lunch & Dinner Offerings:** Pizzas; Pastas; Vegetarian; Firehouse Grill; Vegetables

## Lost Bag

Athlete Bud Kenan has lost a small blue bag (similar to an umpire's bag) that has a white diamond on it. If anyone finds it, *please* turn it in at the Information Center in Scandling Center or return it to Bud Kenan in Room 109, Bartlett Hall.

## Quotables...

"I appreciate being in the Golden Age Games because it proves that I can still be active in sports and compete in my older years. I enjoy meeting new friends, and seeing old friends again. Being in the Golden Age Games gives me a challenge to stay in shape to compete."

- *Arthur Uggl, Fresno, Calif.*

"I like attending the Golden Age Games because it gives me an opportunity to meet new people and share new ideas and interests. I also attend these Games to show my kids that life doesn't stop after age 55."

- *Linda Wilson, Denver, Colo.*

"I've enjoyed competing in the National Veterans Golden Age Games, and I've done it since 1988. I train and look forward to each upcoming Games, and I've enjoyed working for and winning my 31 medals. These Games continue to change my life."

- *Bob Blakely, Kerrville, Texas*

"It's encouraging to know you can strive to reach full potential regardless of age or physical limitations. For me, it's a challenge to do my best, and I enjoy seeing my fellow veterans doing the same."

- *Carole Atkinson, Deptford, N.J.*

"We are family – and this is a family reunion of our brother and sister veterans from coast to coast. We cheer each other on – and pray for their well-being until we meet again at our next family reunion. The spirit of these Games gives us a reason to keep on going – regardless of our condition."

- *Sunny Shapiro, Fresno, Calif.*

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## Educational Sessions

All participants, coaches, volunteers and support staff are invited to attend any of the educational sessions offered. Certificates of Training, which identify the number of contact hours for each session, will be given upon completion. If you are interested in attending any of the following sessions, please register with the Information Center in the Scandling Center.

**Today (11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.):** Understanding Vision Loss, presented by Dan Bence in the Sanford Classroom of the Warren Hunting Smith Library.

**Today (3:00-5:00 p.m.):** The Benefits of Aquatic Exercise, presented by Nancy Alexander and Maryane Times at the Bristol Gym Pool.

## Evening Activity

**Tonight: *The Bug Zappers* (with a special guest appearance by *The Rochester Rat Pack*)**

**7:30 p.m. in the Quad**

**(In case of rain, Scandling Center Dining Hall)**

The Bug Zappers is an eight-piece band consisting of a standard rhythm section (drums, bass guitar and bass); a horn section (sax, trumpet and trombone); and a male vocalist/emcee. They perform a wide range of swing tunes from the 40s Big Band Era to the 90s Swing.

## Odds & Ends

### NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE

**GAMES WEB SITE:** Don't miss the opportunity to check out the first-ever Golden Age Games Web site.

You'll find daily news, **event results**, a Games schedule, athlete profiles, a photo gallery and more. Get connected to the site at the Scandling Center's Web Challenge computers outside the dining hall.

The Web address is: [www.va.gov/vetevent/gag](http://www.va.gov/vetevent/gag).

**EMERGENCY CONTACT:** Emergency calls should be directed to the Command Center at (315) 781-4351. Non-emergency phone calls can be received in the Information Center at the Scandling Center at (315) 781-3512.

**WHEELCHAIR REPAIR:** The wheelchair repair room is located in Hale Hall, Room 104.

**LOST & FOUND:** Open 7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. in the Information Center at the Scandling Center.

### MEDAL PRESENTATION CEREMONIES:

Medal award ceremonies will take place at 4:00 p.m. today and tomorrow outside the south entrance to the Warren Hunting Smith Library. If it is raining, the presentations will take place in the Library Atrium. Medals will be presented today for billiards, pentathlon and checkers.